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DEATH

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IN

DISGUISE;

A

TEMPERANCE POEM.

From the MSS. of Mr. McDonald Clarke.

BOSTON:
PUBLISHED BY B. B. MUSSEY,
TWENTY-NINE
CORNHILL.
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PREFACE.

This trifle, is laid on the altar of Temperance Reform, — if good, the good will take care of it — if bad — let it perish.

The character it attempts to sketch, is taken from among those who stand on the summits of Society. The vulgar look up to the lights of intellect and virtue ; but the brightest sunshine has always the blackest shadow. When a great man falls, the hoot of his disgrace is soonest heard, and seldom forgotten. 'T is among the gifted, and the affluent, that the banner of Sobriety must first be raised — the thoughtful of the humbler classes, will crowd around it, — and those who cannot use their heads to think, must be coaxed to act. 'T is of little avail to hamper the grog-holes of a city, whilst the High Places of temptation are told that a handful of bank-notes can cover the eyes of Pub-

lic Authority, and close the lips of Public disgust. Gentlemen — you must be fair — first break the neck of your demi-john — and then, you will cease to help break the heart of the widow, and the orphan, whose guardian has gone down to a foggy grave, whilst the beacon light of Temperance has been put out with the dripping of wine-drops, and many a human being, blasted to the bottomless Hell of infamous habits.

What thousands, of a neglected class, have been drowned in surges, wilder than the writhing waves of the Atlantic — the fiery surges of drunkenness — thousands, the coral rock, their tombstone, the sea-weed, their winding-sheet. Let the Spirit of the States front all opposition. Overlook none of the victims of Evil. The poor sailor must be rescued from the claws of the grog-den, ere his conscience is torn piecemeal. Let the talented, among the young generation of this great Country, come forward, —drag

down, and shake, with the iron grasp of intellect, the fat villain, bloated with ungodly gain, whose voice is divided between vice, and virtue, as the weather-cock of interest, points to Mammon, or Morality. Him, whose skulking professions always sneak on the side that seems strongest, who would skin his own shadow, if he could but catch it. But why kick a rotten character. Soon will his monument be, a skeleton — his epitaph, the hangman's curse.

Let our young men come forward, breast to breast, against the fleshy bulwark of wickedness — save the weak wretch, who abuses his body, and dwarfs his own soul with every guilty indulgence. Let them do this, and their lives will be like watch-towers — their death leave a gap of glory that shall be filled with the light of a lovely remembrance, glittering thro' the moral storms of coming Centuries, over which the rainbow of the Millenium will arch at last.

Boston, Oct. 10th, 1833.

DEATH
IN
DISGUISE.

ARGUMENT.

Boys let loose from School — A skaiting frolic — Sam Sub, the genius — Orva, his cousin, and sweetheart — Dawn of affection — Love scene by moonlight on the river's side — Aunt Pat's tea party — Laugh at old Puddy the sottish Pedagogue — Sub's elevation to fame and rank, distinction in the Senate, and battle field. — Description of his marriage with his young Cousin —Dizziness of high stations — Sudden fall to drunkenness and disgrace — His ribbons changed for rags — Young wife turned from a palace to a poor house — Sick mother and starving children — Bleak winds blowing the rain on their bed of straw — Father found frozen to death with a stone for his pillow, and his white hairs covered with dirt — Satan peeps in at the window and whispers with a sneer — So much for wine !

The school is out — wild hurrahs
Are heard from many a merry mouth,
That laugh at old Pud's leathern laws—
Happy boys — the sun is south,
Through the blue sky the winds are blowing
Joyous as an Irish glee,

And they are all — hurrah — a-going
Tom and Bob and — 'Do take me,'
Says a little chap with a chubby nose,
That looks, poor fellow, almost froze;
Well, come along — don't be late —
We 'll all have a studding-sail skate —
Give him in the snow a roll,
Or he 'll surely freeze, poor soul—
That 's your sort — how do you feel? —
Let us have a hearty squeel,
Nee-e nee-e, — hurrah, old Pud,
We 're the boys of Boston blood,—
We 're the chaps for roaring fun—
Another round upon the run,
Louder than a battle gun,
All together, every one,
Hurrah, hurrah — slick as mud,
Who cares now for poor old Pud;
Old Mr. Puddledy is so fuddled see,
He does 'nt know, what he 'd be at;
He is a pedagogue, who sees the ready grog,
With his red eyes, half buttoned in fat.
Tom, or Dicky, do pick up his hat,

Help old Pud, out of the mud,
Give him a kick, and then we 'll scud —
Hurrah for the boys of Boston blood.'

Thus shouted Sam, the soul of the scene,
In his breeches of blue, and jacket of green.
And he 's the merriest fellow of all,
Has the swiftest skait, and the highest ball,
When they wheel on the ice, or are off on the grass,
As winter, or summer, across the earth pass.
And he never was seen at the foot of his class,
Or heard to sing out to some dunce, You ass —
Oh little Sam Sub is a splendid boy,
His name makes his mother's heart tremble with joy,
Tho' his father says nothing, — I'm sure he 's proud,
For the strongest emotions are scarce ever loud;
May the blessing of God on that little boy light,
He whispers his prayers over every night,
Is up with the very first glimmer of day,
And has always his lesson before he 's at play.

There 's a dear little girl with a delicate face,
Who always is seen too, in the *high* place ;
Her seat at school is the nearest to Sam,
She turns up her nose at him — but it 's a sham.
She already is versed in the womanly art,
Of hiding in frowns the fire of her heart ;
She loves him a thousand times best of them all,
Who are swift on the skait, or are strong with the ball.
Oh the sweet little sinner, look ladies, look,
She peeps at him now from the edge of her book
Whilst the blood of her body rose to her brow,
Ha, ha ! — Sam has just caught her, I vow ;
As she hides her face in her apron — poor thing,
How much of misfortune that fond peep will bring.

* * * * *

The Winter is gone — and behind the old fence
Where I saw heaps of snow but a few weeks since,
There 's a winding line of pale green grass,
And the birds sing there as the south winds pass.
Hush — did 'nt you hear a soft voice call, —
Orva asks him to help her over the wall,
For she does n't on Sam *now* turn up her nose,

He 's kissed off the frost from her lips I s'pose —
Well, bless their young hearts, they are Cousins,
and should
Love each other, and always be modest and good.

* * * * * * *

Ten years are gone — and o 'er their souls
The freshet of first affection rolls,
Bearing on its burning wave,
Hopes, that will quench, but in the grave,
And passions, whose delicious strife,
May sweep away the flowers of life,
And leave the thorn of memory there,
'Mid the still winter of Despair.

They stand upon the river's bank
After the evening sunbeams sank —
Fondly lingering arm in arm,
Beneath the twilight's pensive charm.
They think, and talk, of faded years,
Until their eyes are flushed with tears,
And whilst their spirits glance the scenes,
Her head upon his bosom leans.

'Cousin, don't you always feel,
This hour's influence o'er you steal
With a spell, that makes the sad'ning heart,
Forget awhile its earthly part,
And long to rise above the light,
That gleams in front of coming night,
To that pure world whose fadeless bliss
Is so faintly shadowed forth in this.

'And don't you dearly love to stand,
At twilight on the ocean's sand,
To look out on its misty verge,
And see the bashful moon emerge,
— Like love upon the waves of life
Charming its sorrow and its strife —
Whilst thoughts of death and — and, —
Cousin dear, give me your hand.'

'Do you *love* me — do you — oh
I feel — I feel it must be so —
I see your soul melt through your eyes,
And answer me in fond replies,
But — ah — forgive me — if I doubt —

I 've seen the light of love put out
By the wild cloud that sometimes lies
So darkly in those kind, kind eyes.'

'Nonsense Orva — how you talk,
Come let us lengthen, love, our walk,
You 've been so little out of late,
Your mind 's in a very nervous state —
A kiss is budding on your lip,
Let 's have it — now a skip, a skip,
Just as old Puddy used to do,
When he was getting all so blue.'

'Ah Cousin, pray don't pull me so,
I am unwisely sad I know ;
For something on my spirit weighs,
That whispers, these are precious days,
And will soon, too soon be gone,
Whilst frightful ones, are frowning on,
To go down in ghastly clouds and tears,
And leave me 'mid the dark'ning years.'

'Cod-fish and cold 'taters — psho,
You 're blue as girls without a beau,

'Come let us take a Shaker's dance,
Over, over to our Aunt's;
Dearest ducky, when we're there
We 'll loll in the wide rocking chair,
Whilst we have a roaring song,
And a dish of her sublime souchong.

'And then, dear, for a joyous tale,
— Enough to make old Nick turn pale, —
Of days when we were both at school,
And I was such a jealous fool
As to think, 'cause you turned up your nose,
And ogled all the other beaux,
You did n't care for your poor Cous',
But you lied — as Love most always does.'

'And then we 'll have a homespun laugh,
About that literary calf,
Our poor old master, Mr. Pud,
Who used to tumble in the mud,
And bump his nose upon the rock,
And break his bottle with the knock,

And when I went to help him up,
Would give a terrible hickup:

"Off you lit - tle ras - cal, off —
Ble - ss me what a - a co - u - gh."
Cough with a vengeance, poor old Pud,
But see, dear Sir — you 're in the mud,
You must have caught your cough within
The shadow of a glass of gin.'

'Cousin you 're enough to make
A martyr titter, at the stake '—
And you 're enough to charm Despair
From torturing his spirit there;
That lofty brow, those loving eyes
Soft as the summer's sweet moonrise,
Tell of intellect, and home, and peace,
And innocence, that can never cease.

* * * * * * *

Ten dim years are gone, since they,
Have waited for their wedding day.
The thought of that 's enough I 'm sure,

To keep the earthliest passions pure;
For he, who chooses in his youth,
Some girl of gentleness and truth,
If that love does n't keep him chaste,
His heart has early run to waste.

By the candle's and the cannon's light,
Fame read his name, and owned its might.
For Sam has stood in the Senate Hall,
And proud eyes have been seen to fall.
And when war arose in gloom,
And flourished o'er the grave, her plume,
None, a ruddier sword did wield
'Mid the dark flash of the battle field.

That name is like the morning star,
High up in heaven, and hailed afar,
A beacon 'mid the moral storm,
When foul Energies round a Nation form,
Whilst treasonous Intellect essays
To blind Virtue, with its lightning blaze,
And the mind's thunder, crush each heart,
That would scorn to act a traitor's part.

That name rings loud from North to South,—
Melts on admiring woman's mouth,—
Tolls in muffled Envy's ear,
Like the bell that stirs a hero's bier —
In drawing-room, and workshop door,
'T is whispered, and half-shouted o'er,
And every body seems to feel
His brain is strong, if it do n't reel.

In the midst of all this glare of Fame,
He turns fondly to a gentle name,
— Wrote in his prayer-book long ago —
His heart beats quick, his cheek 's a-glow,
But fades, as his eye begins to fill
For tears burst forth without the will,
As he gazed through those delicious tears,
At the name that charmed his boyish years.

He thinks how much he owes that name,—
How, through life, each nobler aim,
Each prouder impulse of his heart,
Has had with its dear sound, a part—
It has kept each selfish passion just,

Chilled the blasting flame of lust —
Bid him feel how *she* would thrill with shame,
Should *he* ever dishonor his high name.

He gazes — till it scarce appears
Through the bright mist of rapture's tears,
Writes it fondly, on another leaf,
Swears that reason must be deaf,
Every manlier feeling lost,
And his name by Honour's finger crossed,
Ere he forgets the tender oath,
That soon shall seal the fate of both.

* * * * * * *

The night before their wedding one,
They walked out, as the setting sun
O'er the earth its yellow lustre threw,
And the west was rich with red and blue,
Whilst twilight's curtain, spreading far
Was pinn'd with a single diamond star,
On which they both in silence gaze,
Thinking of their dear childish days.

Her lip loses its voluptuous dye,—
A cloud steals o'er her vivid eye—

A tear starts to its trembling lid
And is left to disappear, unhid—
Her head droops down upon his breast
And to his beating heart is pressed,
Whilst his lip sinks on hers — and there
They melt, in pleasure's silent prayer.

Ah why, when joy is half in bloom,
Is the human heart so weighed with gloom —
Why, when love and peace unite,
And woman sees her sweetest night,
Stealing so slowly on, to hide
The bliss for which her soul has sighed —
Why then should hope be quenched in fears,
And her soul dim'd with boding tears ?

The lamb on yonder sea-girt height,
Where the summer sunbeams flash so bright,
Where white flowers by the black rocks grow,
And fruits are clustering all a-glow,
Why turns it from the tempting grass
That droops there in one lavish mass, —

The precipice is calm — but oh,
A storm of waters howls below.

The prayer was buried in the kiss,
That embalmed the holiest hour of bliss.
They leaned upon the broken wall
She said 't was silly, after all,
— Whilst her pale face kindled to a blush—
To let such rough forebodings brush
The bloom from the sweet thought, that they
In each others arms, should thenceforth pray.

'Oh Cousin, how often in the days
When fate held you from my doating gaze,
And I have had, for *years*, alone
The memory of *your* voice's tone
To make the voice of absence, not
So wearisome in every spot
Where I couldn't hear it talk of you,
— Who to me was hope, and memory too —

'How oft in those times have I said
— Whilst sighing on my sleepless bed, —

Oh, were we but beneath one roof,
Where I could have but daily proof
That you had not forgotten me, —
And could I but your kind face see,
And join with you in evening prayer,
I could *almost* bear a rival's there.

'And though I saw you smile on her —
Yet even *that* should not deter
My heart from praying for your weal,
Altho' I knew you loved, a deal,
A great deal better her, than me,
Yet still it would be bliss to see
You sometimes also smile on one,
Who'd forgive you all the ill you'd done.

'And often, when the waning moon
Has chilled the warm white clouds of June,
I have got up from my bed,
And against the window leaned my head,
Wondering, if *you* too, ever stole
Whole nights from sleep, with heart and soul
To think, would there ever come a night
When *you'd* put out my bed-room light.'

He presses her white brow, and smiles
To see her eyes, so like a child's,
As innocent and sorrowless,
Alas — that *he* should make them less, —
That he, so soon should cloud with fears
The beauty of their wedded years,
Bring the woman that adored him so,
To worse than even the widow's woe.

* * * * * * *

The summer moon with all her light
Smiles softly on their nuptial night;
Their favorite clergyman attends,
With two or three congenial friends, —
With blushing smiles, and starting tears,
The playmate of her virgin years,
Him she loved when hope had fled,
Kisses her tears, and holds her head.

They 've prayed — approach the sacred Pile,
Move up the dimly lighted aisle, —
And by that summer evening light,
Swear to hate the wrong, — to hold the right—

To love — through every altering scene —
When heaven is stormy — or serene,—
Whilst Death — and Hell — were witness there —
And God came down to hear them — swear.

* * * * * * *

The light of love was darkened soon —
A cloud came o'er their honey moon —
Possession half put out the fire,
That softly flashes through desire,
And that young bride, whose bosom swelled
With passions, truth so long had held,
Found she had kept them warm, and chaste,
For him, who sickened with the taste.

Oh! there is a poisonous thought,
That makes the youth it preys on, short,
The bitterest feeling of the whole
That can curdle a true doating soul —
It is to find — too late — too late,
That we have madly mixed our fate,
Wasted hopes, too pure for earth,
With one, who never knew our worth.

Home's sunshine was fast going down —
The gorgeous shadow of Renown
Darkened the beauty of love's bower,
Whilst memory, with her moon-beam hour,
Was all the light that that sad bride
Had to sooth her, when Hope shriek'd, and died –
And memory's brightness makes more drear
The mind that gropes, from year to year.

The worthless husband, soon is caught
By hearts, whose blood is sold and bought—
Pride's scavengers, who clear the road,
To guilty Grandeur's mean abode,
Who sneak behind the heels of Fame,
Licking the dirt off of a name,
And if they are not stretched by law,
Live long, to bawl in Fame's hurrah.

She sent her sister, Flattery, and
The Ennobled Tipplers of the land
— Who by the cheated world are thought
To do as great men always ought;
But in the noon of Fortune basked,

As their vice, a damask curtain mask'd,—
Sent him a gilded card, to meet
Friendship and Honour, and to — eat.

These dazzling dinner parties came,
As often as the shout of Fame,—
He staggered back at dead of night
A mist across his spirit's light,
And found his weary wife awake,
With lids that veiled her bosom's ache,
And a pale babe upon that breast
Doomed no more, on earth, to rest.

Home had lost its early charm —
Around it spread a dismal calm —
On the hearth there was an empty chair —
A father's seat was seldom there ;—
But if, perhaps, he chanced to spend
An evening with his gentlest Friend,
And the little one, that pressed her knee,
Domestic Love — 'twas not for thee.

That pensive wife in vain might look,
To win him from his envied book,

That little one, got but a slap,
If she stole upon her father's lap —
Ambition's icy touch could shove
Away, the soft warm hand of love,
He, who was clasped to a Nation's breast,
Scowled, when home's to his was pressed.

The pinnacles of Fate — the heights
Whereon an eagle spirit lights,
Are edged with icicles and snow,
Round which the eternal sunbeams glow;
But *there* that sun's imperial blaze
Falls feeble as the sick moon's rays,
Whilst on the little valley's side,
The simple flowers of love, abide.

Woman — if thou wouldst be blest,
Let not thy virgin wishes rest
On him, who kneels at Grandeur's shrine —
His heart is not for God — or thine —
The withering lust of wealth and power
Glares baleful o'er his dark'ning hour, —

And he will spring from that bent knee,
To coldly turn from heaven — and thee.

Late and later out at night,—
His brow is dark, his lip is white, —
He carries on that clouded brow,
No summer calm of kindness now;
The wintry winds of Fame have beat
Thereon with all their blasting sleet,
Whilst her lightnings only make the gloom,
Dark as his own damning doom.

Often, and oftener with his breath
Mixes the steam of moral death,
From which his home in horror shrinks —
Rumor mutters low, 'he drinks' —
But Fame with her false blast, can drown
And long keep Public clamor down, —
The vices of her Pets increase,
Whilst sneaking interest whispers 'peace.'

Heaven! — and has he lost thy helm —
Will Luxury's ruddy waves soon whelm,

Hurl his great name on ruin's rock
And strip his Household with the shock —
Has he his bridal oath forgot,
The widow's and the orphan's lot,
The helpless anguish of their tone,
As they drift this wintry world alone.

The memory of that blissful night,
Has faded like the Summer's light —
The playmate of his purer days,
Whose young cheek blushed so, with his praise,
Whose love, with reason will endure,
— For she loved him, when alone, and poor —
That kind devoted one, would start
If *now* she could but see his heart.

* * * * *

Ten blacker years are gone — alas —
I saw a blasted form just pass —
That bloated face, that beastly eye,
That greasy hat, stuck on awry,
That livid mouth, loud curses stretch,—
Shame — who can be the hideous wretch —

The ghost of Grandeur, with a frown,
Dropp'd a rotten wreath — and — looked down,

Avenging God — and can it be
Him, who once stood so near to thee —
The man whom Genius glorified,—
A Nation looked up to with pride,—
Rank — Talent — Virtue — Wealth combined
To make the Lordliest of mankind —
And now is Grandeur's voice so mute,
That Earth may hear each blackguard's hoot?

* * * * *

Where is she, the pure, the fair,
Who came, his place of light, to share,
Who, when a child, so often played
With him beneath the Summer's shade —
Ah — kind inquirer — hear, and start —
The Winter of the human heart
Has strip'd off all love's summer leaves —
Look, where that worse than widow, grieves.

Look at yonder crumbling hut,
Whose broken door with boards is shut, —

Through each patched and dirty pane,
The wind blows in the bleak night rain, —
See the lean little ones crawl round
The cold scant embers on the ground,
Whilst the sick mother on her straw
Sighs — Babes what are you crying for?

For bread — for bread — Oh mother sure
You cannot be so very poor,
That you 'll let us all day sit,
Oh mother dear, without a bit.

* * * * *

God have mercy on their orphan years —
I can see to write no more, for tears, —
Soon round them Guilt's pale Fiends will twine,
Whilst Hell sneers — and whispers — *Wine.*

— Hush — what noise is that without —
Did n't you hear a vulgar shout? —
Look from the window — who is there —
A livid wretch, whose thin white hair
— Withered early, with deserved despair —
Is tangled o'er a splendid brow,
Gaze — is *he* so altered now?

You cannot through its wrinkles trace
The immortal lines of mental grace.

The faded head rests on a stone —
Leaves and sand are round it blown —
No pitying hand is there to place
A veil o'er that insulted face,
But a wild group of dirty boys,
In an ear, that cannot heed their noise,
'Hoot, drunken booby, lift your head :'
Ah — why abuse the friendless dead ?

Boston, Oct. 9th, 1833.
Wednesday Morn'g, 10 *o'clock.*

THE DEVIL, AND THE GROCER.

A grocer found old Nick one morning
All snugly cock'd on his brandy cask,
And, in both pockets, chucking corn in,
That behind the door lay in a pile;
'What want you here sir, let me ask,'
Short-Tail gave a sulphury smile,

And said, 'why dear Slip, do n't be cross,
I hav n't been doing you any ill,
This corn you know is an utter loss,
All your patrons now so nicely swill,
That they've no desire to eat.
I just met Sam Suck in the street,

'Who looked confounded blue, and swore,
You would n't trust him any more,—
I've agreed to lend him the three cents.
But they *all* may drink at my expense,
And when we settle *our* account,
Don't fear but *you* shall have the amount.'

Slip scratched his pate, and blew his nose,
Muttering, ' Why dang it, as time goes,
I don't see but I soon shall lose
All my swizzlers — I sell more screws
For coffin lids, than sausages, or
'Taters now — and tho' I draw
Rivers of brandy, yet somehow
I don't drag a-head I vow.'

The Devil grinn'd — and archly said,
' Dear Slip, come, hold up your head ;
You've taken a drop yourself this morn,
For I see your spirits all are gone ;
It is n't the brandy sure, that kills,
The Doctors shoot them with their pills.'

' But what do *you* want with my corn,
You've taken half I had this morn.'
' Oh I want it for my women folks,
For I'm a-going to night to coax,
The girls to make me up and bake
Some of my favorite johnny-cake.'

'Well won't you have some *brandy* too?'
'Oh no, we don't use that' — 'phew, phew!

'Not use brandy in Hell! I vum,
I guess your friendship's but a hum.'—
The Devil jumped from the empty cask,
For his friend had peeped most thro' the mask.

Boston,
Oct. 10th, 1833.